United Nations A/AC.109/2009/SR.11

General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 July 2009

Original: English

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Resumed session

Summary record of the 11th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 23 June 2009, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Natalegawa ..... (Indonesia)

Contents

Adoption of the agenda

Question of Tokelau

Hearing of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territory

Report of the Caribbean Regional Seminar

Report of the Special Committee

Closure of the session

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

09-37698 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Question of Tokelau (*A/AC.109/2009/2; A/AC.109/2009/L.15*)

2. **The Chairman** drew attention to the working paper on Tokelau prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2009/2).

Hearing of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territory

3. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Toloa (Ulu-o-Tokelau) took a place at the Committee table.*

4. **Mr. Toloa** (Ulu-o-Tokelau), titular head of the Territory, said that while Tokelau remained fully committed to self-determination, the two referendums held thus far had not resulted in the two-thirds majority required for a change in status. They had, nevertheless, highlighted the importance of strengthening Tokelau's institutions and uniting the population. It would be several years before the General Fono considered holding another referendum. Meanwhile, it had decided that more needed to be done to strengthen local capacity and infrastructure and to promote economic development.

5. Like all nations, Tokelau was feeling the effects of the global financial crisis. It was therefore taking steps to ensure that its scarce resources were used wisely, in particular, by establishing development priorities, setting realistic targets and working to integrate good governance practices into its public management systems. Public expenditure would be realigned accordingly. The 2003 Joint Statement of the Principles of Partnership between Tokelau and New Zealand and the $NZ 43.1 million strong Economic Support Arrangement for the period 2007-2010 reflected both the progress made by Tokelau and the ongoing commitment of New Zealand to the Territory.

6. Tokelau had also been affected by the outbreak of the influenza A (H1N1) virus and was taking steps to protect the population. It was acutely aware of the effect the pandemic might have on its population.

7. The Council for the Ongoing Government of Tokelau was looking forward to its first meeting with the Prime Minister of New Zealand. It hoped to convey to him the importance of the special relationship between Tokelau and New Zealand.

8. His Government was working to raise international awareness about the effects of global warming on small and fragile atolls. Rising sea levels had eroded beaches and contaminated water supplies. Global warming had also affected the quantity and type of seafood available. Tokelau's efforts to secure funding for its climate change adaptation programme had been thwarted owing to its status as a territory of New Zealand. He asked the Committee and the United Nations system as a whole to back those efforts and expressed appreciation to the United Nations Development Programme for its support in that regard.

9. His Government believed that all people were responsible for their physical environment and was working on an ambitious energy policy that would enable its small atolls to operate on 100 per cent renewable energy. As Ulo-o-Tokelau, he would continue to urge the international community to take steps to limit activities that impacted negatively on the environment.

10. Tokelau's development efforts would have to be supported by an effective public service based on the principles of good governance, an enabling human resource development plan and a robust infrastructure. Those areas had been identified as priority outcome areas in Tokelau's national strategic plan. As for specific developments, he mentioned the ongoing shipping project with New Zealand; the launch of the national infrastructure project and the judicial project; the planned review of Tokelau's devolution policy; the work being done on the national strategic plan and the national human resources plan; the conclusion of a waste management agreement with Samoa; the ongoing village development programme; and the decision to build a new Tokelau Office in Samoa.

11. The Tokelau International Trust Fund, meanwhile, stood at approximately $NZ56 million. Tokelau was grateful to New Zealand for its assistance. Australia also contributed to the Fund.

12. The main ingredients of nation building — a constitution and a flag — were now in place. All that remained was a formal endorsement, a national symbol and a national anthem. Tokelau's Constitutional Committee would meet later in the year to discuss an appropriate governance structure for Tokelau. Thus the preparatory work involved in establishing such a

structure and integrating good governance practices at all levels was well under way.

13. *Mr. Toloa withdrew.*

14. **Ms. Graham** (Observer for New Zealand) said that, as administering Power for Tokelau, New Zealand saw to it that the Committee received timely and accurate information about Tokelau and that the leaders of the Territory received strong support as they tackled major challenges such as the global economic crisis and the influenza pandemic. Very close cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the New Zealand Ministry of Health had left Tokelau well prepared to deal with the latter.

15. A core objective was to provide essential services and a good quality of life to the 1500 people of Tokelau. Accordingly, the education and health infrastructure and the shipping service that tied the three remote atolls together and linked them to the wider world were being progressively renewed. In addition, efforts were being made to enhance economic development and to improve water, sanitation and waste management. There was room for the development of the tourism sector in particular, but only in accordance with the social and cultural requirements of each atoll community. Tokelau itself must set the pace and character of policy development and project implementation.

16. New Zealand's new Prime Minister and other high officials planned to meet with Tokelau's leaders for an in-depth discussion of the Territory's situation and aspirations, and to reaffirm the shared determination of both parties to work for a viable and forward-looking community on the atolls. Some members of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee of Parliament hoped to be able to visit Tokelau later in the year, to gain first-hand knowledge of its fragile position in the wide expanses of the Pacific.

17. New Zealand would continue to work with Tokelau to meet the needs of its people, and it welcomed the Committee's continuing interest.

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2009/L.15

18. **Mr. Mas** (Observer for Papua New Guinea), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of his delegation and Fiji, drew particular attention to paragraphs 6, 7, 13 and 14.

19. **Mr. Isimeli** (Fiji) noted that New Zealand had done much to further Tokelau's economic and political aspirations, with the full support of the United Nations. The draft resolution underscored the close collaboration the Territory had enjoyed in its ongoing process of decolonization. That was indeed the best way to enable the Special Committee to fulfil its mandate.

20. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2009/L.15 was adopted.*

Report of the Caribbean Regional Seminar
(A/AC.109/2009/CRP.1)

21. **The Chairman**, after thanking the Government and people of Saint Kitts and Nevis for hosting the Seminar, said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft report of the Caribbean Regional Seminar and annex it to the Special Committee's report to the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

22. *It was so decided.*

Report of the Special Committee
(A/AC.109/2009/L.14)

23. **The Chairman** drew attention to the draft report, which followed the same pattern as the reports of previous years. He took it that the Committee wished to adopt it and to authorize the Rapporteur to submit it directly to the General Assembly.

24. *It was so decided.*

Closure of the session

25. **The Chairman** reviewed the work accomplished by the Special Committee during the past session, and observed that in the coming year, the Committee would need to chart the course of action to be pursued after the conclusion of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism in 2010. It also needed to explore how better to guide the process of decolonization in the contemporary world. The Special Committee must remain engaged in the process of decolonization with the active participation of the United Nations system and the Territories themselves, and with enhanced cooperation from the administering Powers. He declared the session closed.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.